

Cécile-Anne Sibout

# JOAN OF ARC AND ROVEN



*“It was easier  
to burn her at the stake  
than to wrench her  
from the soul of France.”*

André Malraux, 31 mai 1964

JOAN OF ARC  
AND ROUEN

Cécile-Anne Sibout

Translated by Hazel Bertrand



# JOAN OF ARC AND ROVEN





#### Cover :

Joan of Arc Being Led to her Death  
(detail), Isidore Patrois.

Fine Arts Museum, Rouen.

#### Previous pages :

*This painting by Isidore Patrois (1867) depicts Joan being brought by cart to the Old Marketplace to be burnt at the stake. It is an atmospheric but somewhat fanciful version of events. Elegant ladies in hennins are prevented from approaching Joan by the soldiers that surround her and the castle towers are not in fact visible from this spot.*

Fine Arts Museum, Rouen.

Design: Maria Maddalena Marin

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#### Page finder

1. Fine Arts Museum	2, 24, 39, 56
2. Joan of Arc Tower	21, 24-25, 27
3. 102, rue Jeanne d'Arc	21-22, 24
4. Remains of the old city walls	30
5. The Courthouse	31
6. Half-timbered houses	35
7. Rue des Bons-Enfants	40
8. Rue Damiette	40
9. Aître Saint-Maclou	40
10. Rue des Chanoines	41
11. Cathédrale	27, 37, 45 à 47
12. Saint-Maclou	43
13. Saint-Ouen	42, 49 à 51, 55, 69
14. Archbishop's palace	54 à 56
15. Historial Joan of Arc et rue Saint-Romain	54-55, 78
16. The great clock	57
17. Place du Vieux-Marché	2, 34, 56-57, 59, 62 à 64, 68-69, 73, 77
18. Church of St Joan of Arc	64-65
19. The Museum of Antiquities	74-75
20. Le Secq des Tournelles museum	74-75

# CONTENTS



**48**  
ABJURATION AT  
SAINT OVEN

**51**  
The construction of the  
Abbey of Saint Ouen



**52**  
JOAN DECLARED  
A RELAPSE

**57**  
The Great Clock



**6**  
TROUBLED  
TIMES

**14**  
Charles VII

**18**  
The Hundred Years' War



**58**  
BURNED  
AT THE STAKE

**62**  
The Old Marketplace  
through the centuries

**64**  
The present-day Church  
of Saint Joan of Arc



**20**  
THE CASTLE  
OF PHILIP II

**25**  
Joan's brush with torture



**66**  
REDEMPTION  
AND LEGACY

**70**  
The Joan of Arc memorial  
monument in Bonsecours

**73**  
André Malraux's speech

**74**  
Two other major museums



**26**  
A FORTIFIED  
CITY

**31**  
The Courthouse



**76**  
A HISTORIAL  
FOR JOAN



**32**  
A CHURCH TRIAL  
UNDER ENGLISH  
CONTROL

**34**

Half-timbered houses

**37**

Pierre Cauchon

**40**

Everyday life in Rouen  
in the 15<sup>th</sup> century

**46**

The Cathedral district today



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## TROUBLED TIMES

through the heart of the city, however, takes on special significance as her final moments here seem to encapsulate her whole life. As a prisoner undergoing a gruelling trial she spelt out to her judges the reasons behind the chosen path that would bring her so far. Some of her contemporaries such as the poet Villon dubbed her the "girl from Lorraine". In fact she was born just outside this duchy in the

Joan of Arc's journey began in 1412 a long way from the city of Rouen where she spent only the last six months of her short life. Walking in her footsteps

*Joan of Arc's birthplace as seen around 1834. This was Joan's father's farm, adjacent to the church. Its authenticity never having been in dispute, it was listed as a historical monument as early as 1840. It was said that Joan had her first religious vision in the back garden of this house.*

*Joan of Arc dressed as a country lass. This illumination from a 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript portrays her in authentic 15<sup>th</sup> century costume with the added details of sword and halberd, a sign of things to come.*

*French National Library, Paris.*



East of France in the village of Domrémy on the river Meuse. The road through Domrémy was busy with travelling tradesmen, pilgrims and soldiers who kept the villagers up to date with the events that were troubling the realm. King Charles VI had been of unsound mental



Joan of Arc hearing voices, by Henri Chapu. This work, shown in the 1872 Salon, made Chapu famous in his time and he subsequently received a number of official commissions. The theme of Joan of Arc became very "fashionable" during the French Third Republic.  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

health since 1392. Power was in the hands of his entourage. Rivalry amongst his followers led to the assassination of Louis d'Orléans, the king's brother, by John the Fearless, duke of Burgundy in 1407. Civil war then broke out between the two factions known respectively

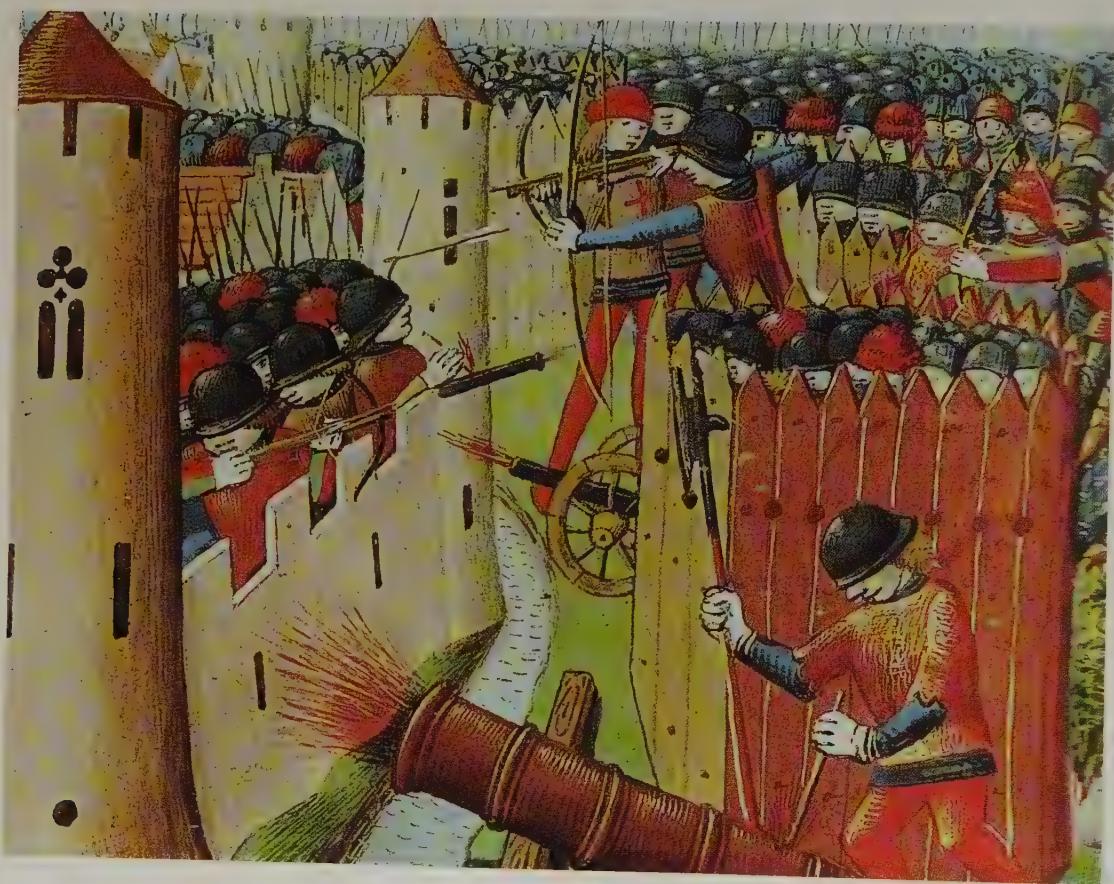
as Armagnacs and Burgundians. The English king Henry V saw his chance and sailed to Normandy to rout the French army at Agincourt in 1415. He went on to take Normandy and Rouen for the English crown in 1419. That same year the duke of Burgundy him-



*King Charles VI  
c.1412. He had  
been the victim of  
occasional bouts  
of madness for the  
previous twenty  
years, something  
the illuminator  
may have been  
trying to suggest.*

self succumbed to an assassination attempt by a follower of the future king Charles VII. The confusion was such that the Treaty of Troyes in 1420 pronounced the English king heir to the throne of France. Despite having been officially removed from the line of

succession the dauphin Charles refused to submit and proclaimed himself king on his father's death in 1422. He took refuge in the city of Bourges in order to escape both the Burgundians and the English. Although he controlled the southern part of the Loire valley his political status remained fragile. Then, in February 1429, Joan of Arc came along and offered to help.



*Minature of the Siege of Orleans, from the Vigils of Charles VII (a vigil is a book of morning prayers), 1484. Despite their use of artillery, the English, shown on the right, are unable to take the city which held a strategic protective position to the south of the river Loire.*

*French National Library, Paris*

## Meeting the King

To begin with nothing appeared to predestine this simple farmer's daughter for her extraordinary rise to fame. She could neither read nor write, but spent her days helping around the house and in the fields. She was not, however completely uneducated. She went religiously to mass and regularly heard sermons preached in the common tongue which were not only a source of religious education but also served to convey news of the military and of royalty. Domrémy was one of the few villages in the region to remain faithful to Charles. At the age of 13 in around 1425 Joan claimed to have heard the voices of Saint Michael, Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine urging her to put the dauphin back on his rightful throne and chase the English from France. The Maid of Orléans (she kept her maidenhood as a symbol of her divine mission) managed to persuade a local army captain to provide her with a small escort. In these troubled times prophecies abounded that the kingdom could be saved by a woman. So after some hesitation the dauphin received Joan in his Chinon seat where she ensured him of her legitimacy and prophesied several future events, one of them being the deliverance of Orléans from the English. The wary dauphin first had the girl questioned by theologians, then granted her a suit of armour and some men. Joan was greeted enthusiastically by the people of Orléans when she arrived. Even the military chiefs, despite initial misgivings, were soon won over by her vigour. The English finally had to lift their siege of Orléans on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1429 and word of her victory quickly spread throughout the realm. Other French victories followed along the Loire valley and Joan prompted the dauphin to ride to Reims to be proclaimed king. On 17<sup>th</sup> July Charles was crowned and anointed with myrrh in recognition of his divine right to the throne.



*This is the only portrayal of Joan executed during her lifetime. The drawing comes from the margins of a register from the Parisian parliament. News of her victory in Orléans had just reached the capital.*

*National Historical Archives Centre, Paris.*



## The story ends

On the back of this success, Joan tried to persuade her diffident king to take Paris back from the Burgundians. The Maid of Orléans led the attack herself, sustained an injury, but failed in her attempt. Charles lacked dynamic leaders and his counselors could not agree on the way ahead. Joan then set off on an independent campaign, galvanizing troops with her charisma and courage. The city of Compiègne under siege from the Burgundians reached out to her for help but she was captured there in May of 1430. Twice she attempted to escape, but failed. Charles VII failed to offer a ransom. She was ransomed in the end for the sum of ten thousand pounds

Joan of Arc  
entering the city of  
Orléans, victorious.  
*Painting by Jean-Jacques Scherrer,  
1887.*  
Fine Arts Museum,  
Orléans.

## CHARLES VII (1403-1461)

Charles VII grew up in a country torn between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians and then invaded by the English. He was forced to flee Paris in 1418 shortly before the Treaty of Troyes signed his birthright over to the English dynasty. Relegated to the south of the Loire valley and mockingly dubbed the “King of Bourges”, it was Joan of Arc who reversed his fortunes and had him crowned king in Reims.



Joan of Arc at the coronation of Charles VII in Reims, by Jules Lenepveu. This painting, commissioned by the State, was completed in 1889 and now hangs in the Pantheon in Paris. Three other large works by the same artist portray different key moments of her epic story.

Charles has sometimes been accused of abandoning Joan to her fate once she fell into enemy hands, but he was ever the shrewd pragmatist and had her redeemed in 1456. He trod a clear sighted and courageous path in life. In armed combat with his foes he emerged victorious in the end. He subdued the feudal lords and put the economy back on its feet with the help of his master of the mint, Jacques Coeur.



to John of Lancaster, duke of Bedford, the English regent in France. He ruled in the place of his nephew the new king of England, Henry VI, who was as yet only a child. John chose one of his faithful followers, Pierre Cauchon, bishop of Beauvais, to lead the negotiations. The Maid of Orléans was being held in his diocese. In December 1430 Joan

*The siege of Paris, 1429, from the Vigils of Charles VII (c. 1484). The attack on gates of Saint-Honoré (in the present-day 1<sup>st</sup> arrondissement of Paris) is shown here. The extensive use of ladders, planks and bundles of firewood in siege warfare is emphasised here. Joan of Arc sustained a minor injury in this attack.*  
French National Library, Paris.

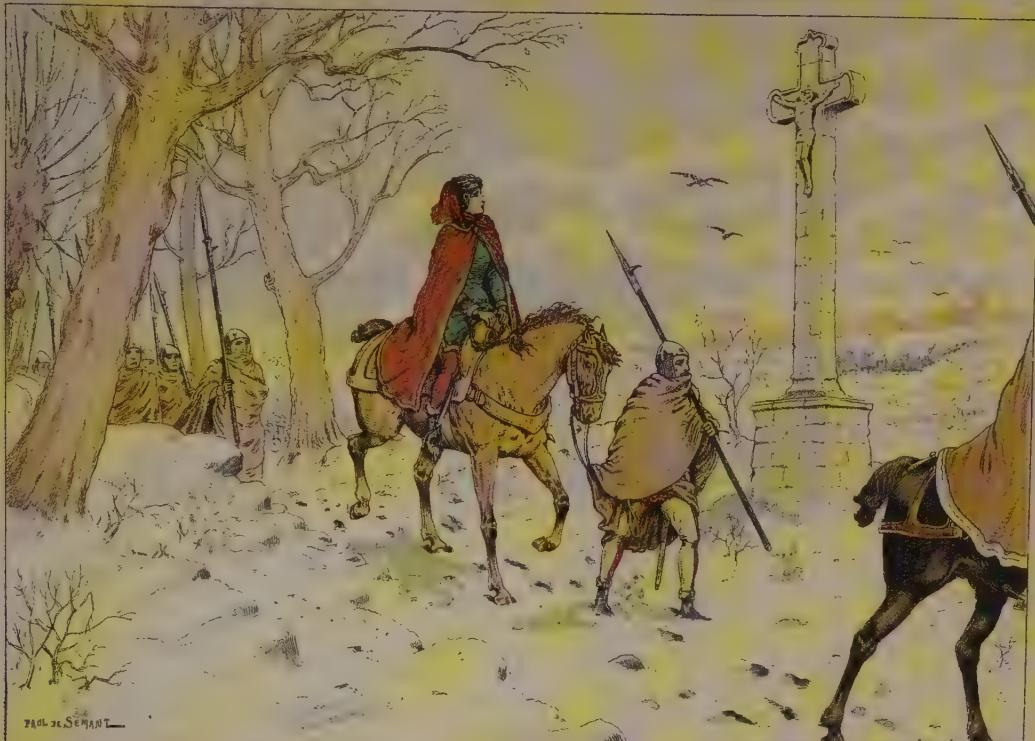


Joan of Arc taken into captivity, by Belgian artist Adolphe Alexandre Dillens, c. 1850. Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg.



*According to legend, Joan of Arc began her day on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1430 by praying in the church of Saint James of Compiègne where this stained glass window from 1883 can be found. Shortly thereafter she was captured by the Burgundians.*

was brought fettered to Rouen which was the English capital at that time. She was to undergo a six-month trial. It is the archives of this original trial and those of the subsequent trial of nullification 25 years later that prove unequivocally that Joan of Arc was not merely a legend. Chronicles and letters



Novembre 1430. — Jean de Luxembourg, dont Jeanne est prisonnière, la vend pour 10,000 livres au roi d'Angleterre. Jeanne quitte sous escorte le château de Beauvoir près de Cambrai, pour être conduite à Rouen.

from the XV<sup>th</sup> century also mention her. The picture that emerges from all these documents is one of an exceptional young woman driven by her faith, her intelligence and her fighting spirit by whose strength alone the course of events in the interminable Hundred Years' War swung definitively in favour of the French.

*Joan of Arc taken prisoner on her way to Rouen by Paul de Sémaut (1855-1915), an illustrator of children's books. Following France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 history books for the general public tended to glorify patriotic heroes.*

## THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

In France the House of Capet died out with the demise of the last of Philip IV's sons in 1328. Salic law forbade a woman from inheriting the throne, but the question remained as to whether she could pass the claim on to her male offspring. If so, the legitimate heir to the French throne was the English king Edward III, Philip IV's maternal grandson. However the French nobility decided instead to grant the crown to one of the late king's nephews. Thus began a long drawn out conflict



*King Edward III of England (1312-1377),  
post-16<sup>th</sup> century painting  
by an anonymous artist.  
National Portrait Gallery,  
London.*

that began as a dynastic war but took on many different guises over the years. In 1346 the English prevailed in the battle of Crécy and again in Calais. Finally in 1453, after many twists and turns of the plot, the on-again off-again war came to an end when Guyenne in the Bordeaux region fell to the French. The French people had gone through much suffering. The State was exerting increasing pressure, especially fiscal pressure, over the population. Patriotic feeling was beginning to emerge.

*The Battle of Crécy  
(1346), miniature  
from a 15<sup>th</sup> century*

*Jean Froissart  
manuscript. Welsh  
archers crushed the  
French cavalry in  
this campaign.*

*French National  
Library, Paris.*



*The Battle of  
Agincourt (1415)  
portrayed as a  
well organised  
confrontation. The  
reality was rather  
a series of savage  
brawls in the mud.*

*French National  
Library, Paris.*



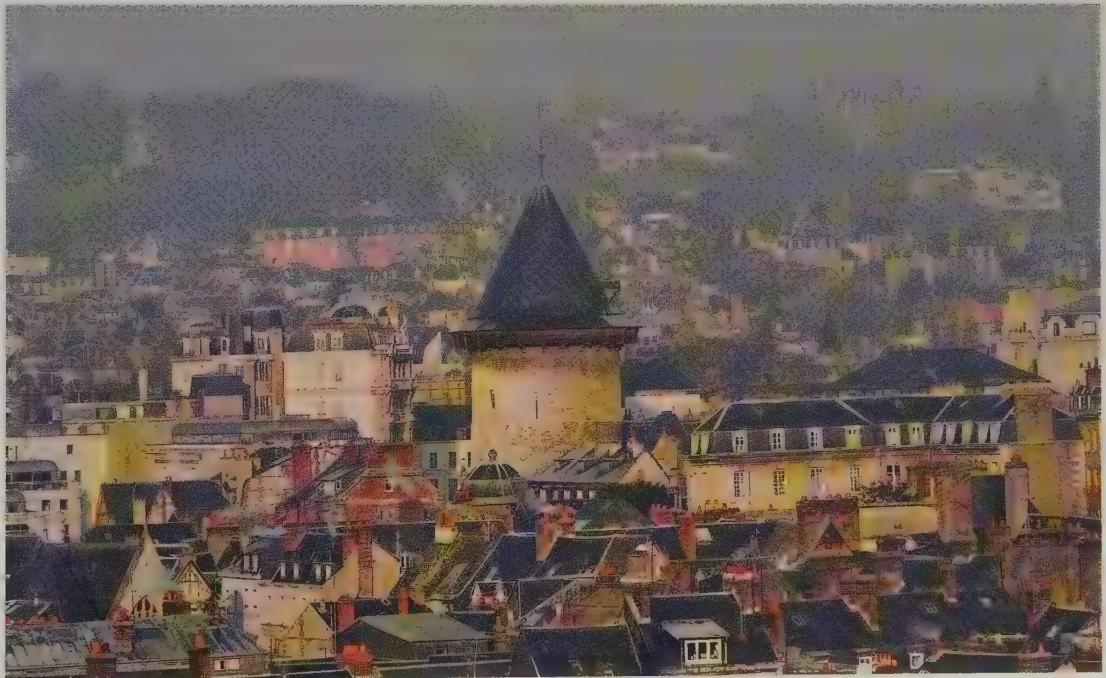


II

## THE CASTLE OF PHILIP II

This last remaining tower was once one of eight that originally flanked a great fortress to the north of Rouen. It is generally known as the “Joan of Arc tower” but this is a misnomer since the Maid of Orleans was never actually imprisoned here, although she did undergo some hours of questioning and was threatened with various instruments of torture within its walls. The remains of the prison where she was held

*The castle of Philip II, generally known as the Joan of Arc Tower, rises above the roofs of Rouen. The turret is a 19<sup>th</sup> century restoration carried out under the guidance of Viollet-le-Duc, specialist in medieval restoration work.*



*This plaque and its accompanying low relief carving marks the entrance to n° 102 rue Jeanne d'Arc, the spot where Joan was held prisoner in a tower lost in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

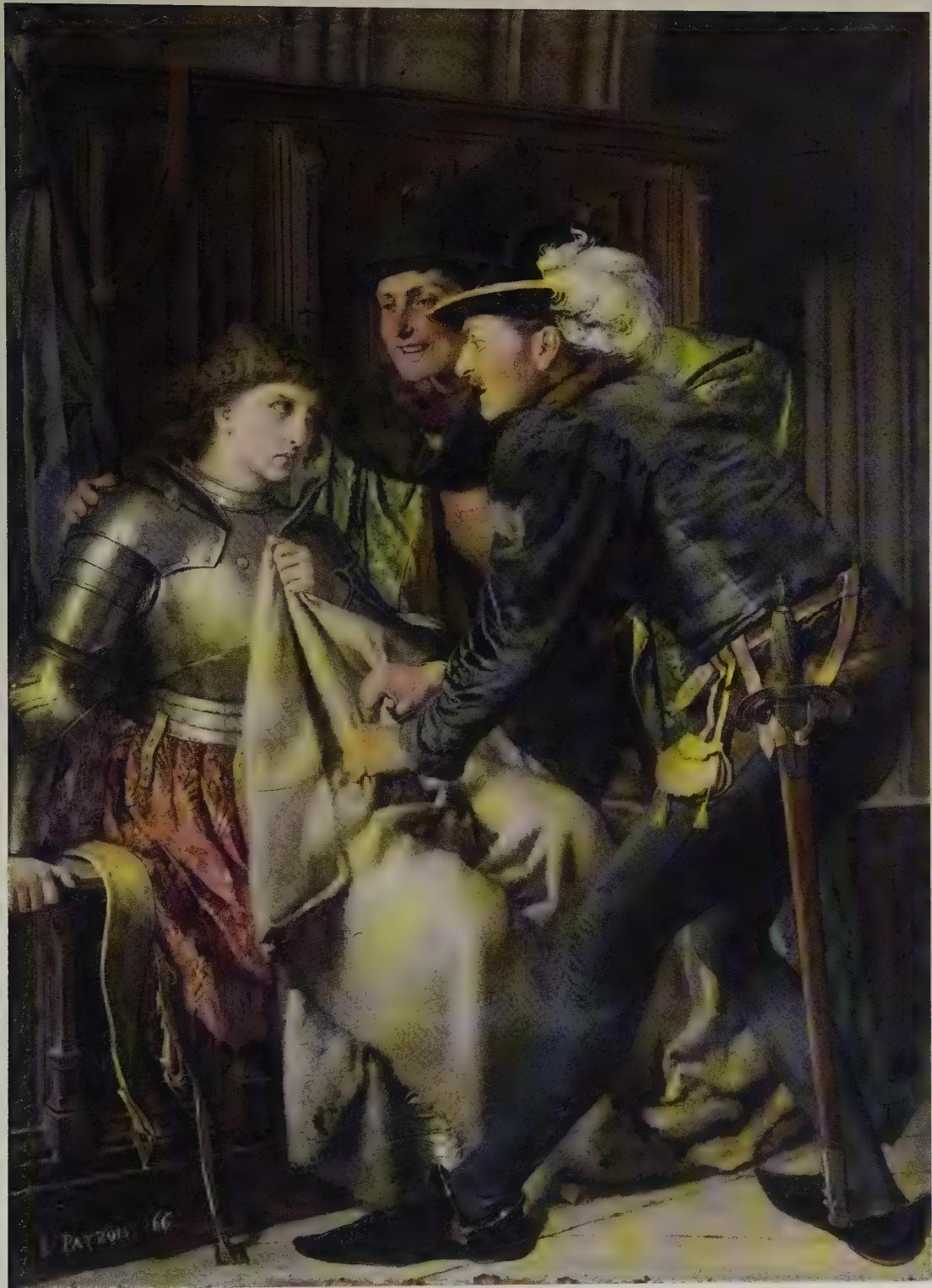


*The shape of the interior courtyard of 102 rue Jeanne d'Arc corresponds exactly to the inside of the old tower known as the Maiden's Tower where Joan was held during her trial. A well, once on the ground floor of the tower, can be seen on the right.*



can be seen in the courtyard of a building in the rue Jeanne d'Arc. A plaque at n° 102 marks the spot. Joan was accused of heresy, a serious crime by religious standards. A guilty verdict would have the added advantage of discrediting Charles VII who had put his trust in her. The charge of heresy implied trial by the Church and thus confinement in an ecclesiastical prison where conditions were not uncomfortable and female suspects could be guarded by women. Joan, however, was held in a secular prison because the English considered her a prisoner of war above all and wanted to leave her no chance of escape. Joan was to endure six months of "martyrdom" as she herself described it during her trial. She was shackled to a makeshift bed by irons chained to a heavy wooden block. The gloomy cell had only three openings: one

Joan of Arc  
assaulted in her  
prison cell, *Isidore  
Patrois*, 1866.  
The painting  
contains a number  
of anachronisms  
such as the hairstyle  
worn by the soldier  
in the foreground,  
fashionable amongst  
the French mid-  
sixteenth century  
nobility.  
*Museum of Fine Arts,  
Angers*





*Joan of Arc, by English painter George William Joy, 1895. An angel watches over the Maiden evoking the voices she said still counselled her during her imprisonment. The artist has chosen to portray her in armour which would have been impossible at that time, though she did wear male clothing in her cell to affirm her mission and protect her from assault by her guards.*  
Fine Arts Museum, Rouen.

*The fortress of Philip II*

*A scale model of the Castle of Rouen built by F. Boutet after the most recent archaeological digs carried out on the site (1983-1984).*

*When French king Philip II conquered his Anglo-Norman rival John Lackland in Normandy he set about building a huge fortress to the north-west of Rouen in a show of strength. His stronghold became the government's seat of power in the province. Surrounded by ditches, it was guarded by several watchtowers of which only one has survived.*

*It is known as the 'Joan of Arc tower', but this is a misnomer as the Maid of Orleans was in fact held in one of the other towers which has since been lost.*

*Only a memorial plaque remains at 102 rue Jeanne d'Arc. During the thirty year English reign in Rouen after the 1418-1419 siege the regent, John, duke of Bedford, enjoyed staying here in the company of his wife and followers.*



to the stairwell, one to the latrines and one small window which admitted some light. Her guards were rough English soldiers and she was the butt of their taunts and occasional lewd behavior. Captivity was thus physical torture for a girl used to riding free on horseback, but also morally hard to bear. Luckily Joan was a hardy young woman and her "voices", she told her judges, never failed to help her through.

## JOAN'S BRUSH WITH TORTURE

**O**n 9<sup>th</sup> May 1431 as her trial entered its final phase, Joan was brought to the castle keep and shown various instruments of torture (red-hot irons, pincers, the rack ...). An inquisitorial trial permitted such practices in order to extort confessions. Bishop Pierre Cauchon and the Dominican Vice-Inquisitor Jean Lemaître were both present in the torture chamber. The Maid of Orleans, however, remained unmoved. Three days later her



*A torture rack, an instrument of torture designed to quarter the victim (tear his limbs from his body). Torture, using instruments such as brodequins and pincers was considered an acceptable method of obtaining confessions until the 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

*Tower of London.*

judges held a private meeting to decide whether or not to stop the pretence and actually use the instruments. The risk was great that Joan, weakened by her time in prison, should die under torture before ever coming to trial. Their aim was to obtain a coherent abjuration of the voices she claimed to hear. It would not do for her trial to be discredited by her followers. The judges decided by a majority to withhold torture.



A circular portrait of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a crown, set within a decorative blue and gold frame. The portrait is positioned in the center of a page filled with dense handwritten French text.

## A FORTIFIED CITY

Pierre-Henri  
Revoil, Joan of Arc  
in Rouen prison,  
1819 (detail).  
Fine Arts Museum,  
Rouen

A walk from Philip II's impressive keep through the city towards the cathedral takes us through a maze of tiny winding streets, a reminder that space was scarce in the days of Joan of Arc's imprisonment here. The city walls were first built in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, then widened and reinforced later. In 1346 work began on new ramparts, higher and thicker for better protection from the English menace – a costly job that was to last 80 years! The watchtowers were equipped with canons. Metal gates and drawbridges also protected the city. Town-dwellers of 16 years and over were legally required to take turns

*A view of Rouen, c. 1525, from the Book of Fountains by alderman Jacques Le Lieur. This is the first ever overall view of the city and is conserved in Rouen's Public Library. Despite the exaggeratedly high cliffs in the background the view is quite accurate. A single bridge spans the river, the port is a hive of activity and houses are closely packed inside the city walls.*





*Plan of Rouen, from the German atlas Civitates Orbis Terrarum (1572-1617). The engraving shows a marked contrast between the walled city and the outlying countryside.*

on the watchtowers day and night all around the city. This “neighbourhood watch” constituted reinforcement for the professional gunners and archers on patrol. In addition, underground recesses or casemates lined the base of the walls. The imposing circular ramparts were completed by three fortresses: Philip II’s castle to the north around which the walls had been built, a barbican south of the river Seine built at the end of the city’s one bridge and a hill fort to the east on Saint Catherine’s Hill. This show of military force did not prevent Henry V, king of England,



*The Abbey of the Holy Trinity and the military  
fort on Saint Catherine's Hill to the east of Rouen.  
Protected by the river Seine and its strong defences,  
Rouen was not an easy city to conquer, but the  
English managed to do just that in 1419.*





*Remains of the old city walls finished in the 15<sup>th</sup> century can still be seen to the north of Rouen (photograph taken in the Lycée Jeanne d'Arc, Rouen).*

from laying a terrible six-month siege to the city, entering in January of 1419. So what became of the city walls? They were dismantled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The main boulevards that encircle Rouen (Bd des Belges, de la Marne, de l'Yser ...) have replaced the old walls in present day peacetime, though the traffic jams that frequently clog them can have drivers up in arms!

*Henry V, King of England (1387-1422) by an unknown artist, probably 17<sup>th</sup> century.*

*National portrait Gallery, London.*



## THE COURTHOUSE

The beautiful Renaissance courthouse that we see today had not yet been built when Joan of Arc came to Rouen. Construction only began around the year 1500. The Exchequer of Normandy, the sovereign court it would eventually replace, was held in Joan's time in Philip II's fortified castle. The assembly of noblemen had the important task of making the final decision in appeal cases.



*The Courthouse of Rouen,  
north facade (c. 1520).*

*At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup>  
century the Gothic style  
began to develop more  
exuberant and flamboyant  
decorative motifs.*



## A CHURCH TRIAL UNDER ENGLISH CONTROL

As soon as John of Lancaster learned of Joan of Arc's arrest in Compiègne by the Burgundians his one thought was to get hold of her and put her to death. She had the reputation of being invincible and the regent

knew that seeing her at the head of her army had a deleterious effect on the morale of his English soldiers. If he could engineer an ignominious public execution for witchcraft he could by the same token discredit his foe Charles VII. Cynically Bedford, regent in

Joan of Arc's trial in Rouen. A court clerk shown next to the judges  
*Library of the Decorative Arts, Paris.*



## HALF-TIMBERED HOUSES

Rouen still boasts over one hundred 15<sup>th</sup> century houses, some even older. Although there was wood in abundant supply, stone had been scarce since Roman times and was used only for important buildings such as churches. Most houses had only a limestone base. The upper parts were built of oak beams and cob (a mixture of clay and straw). On the front-facing walls the vertical beams were known as "colombes" and



the horizontal ones as "sablières". Other beams were placed diagonally. Gables exposed to the wind and rain were often covered with slate. The wealthier houses were usually corbelled, each successive storey jutting out over the lower ones and beams would be carved and walls painted in reds or ochres. A few houses lean dangerously and fires are a frequent hazard.

*The Convent of  
the Cordeliers and  
surrounding streets  
(detail from the Book of  
Fountains).  
Rouen Public Library.*

*A 15<sup>th</sup> century half-timbered former house and shop, now a restaurant, to be found opposite the house of Pierre Corneille near the Old Marketplace.*



the stead of the young Henry VI of England, opted for a religious trial. Sentencing would thus be the responsibility of the Church which was concerned in any case about the celestial voices Joan claimed to hear from on high. Bedford appointed Bishop Cauchon to negotiate a ransom and bring Joan back to Rouen. This he did in December of 1430. Joan's case, suspicion of heresy, fell under inquisitorial jurisdiction. Inquisition trials were traditionally conducted by Dominican monks. Joan thus passed from the hands



The Sentencing of  
Joan of Arc by Anthony  
Serres, 1867. The use of  
chiaroscuro emphasises  
the lone figure of Joan  
before the serried ranks  
of Doctors of law.  
*Museum of Fine Arts,  
Bordeaux*

of Cauchon to those of Jean Lemaître, a senior member of that religious order in Rouen. The judicial process was based on a defamation enquiry so emissaries were dispatched to Domrémy to hear evidence in support of Joan's demonic behavior. They heard nothing but praise for the Maid. Cauchon, undaunted and commissioned by the English to discredit her, enrolled a number of renowned Paris-taught clergy who were, as it happened, involved in counseling the English occupying forces and of whose

## PIERRE CAUCHON (1371-1442)

Pierre Cauchon was born in Reims, but went to Paris at a young age to study theology. Once ordained he became close to John the Fearless, the influential duke of Burgundy. He was entrusted with various diplomatic assignments in a France riven by conflict between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians and more widely in Christendom as a whole where the schism between the Pope in Avignon and the Pope in Rome was at its height. After the assassination of John the Fearless in 1419, Cauchon allied himself with the English, playing

*The tomb of Pierre Cauchon in Lisieux Cathedral from a drawing commissioned by Roger de Gaignières, scholar and art collector (c. 1705).*

*French National Library, Paris.*



a significant part in the Treaty of Troyes which provided for English rule in France. He became bishop of Beauvais living mainly in Paris or Rouen as he was counselor to King Henry V and subsequently to his successor, the regent John of Bedford. The duke of Bedford appointed him to bring Joan of Arc to Rouen when she was taken captive. Cauchon was her principal judge. He would end his life as bishop of Lisieux. He has often been remembered, somewhat anachronistically, as a traitor to his nation but if he remained faithful to the English until his death it was because for him as a jurist their claim to the French throne was legitimate.

JOAN OF ARC AND ROVEN



support he could be sure. The trial was to be more political than religious.

From the outset the law was infringed. Joan, being brought to an ecclesiastical court, should have been held in the Archbishop's jail, not that of the city captain Warwick inside the fortress. This was indicative of the tribunal's manifest lack of independence. The first session took place on 21<sup>st</sup> February. Joan stood alone, bereft of any legal counsel, facing over forty university-educated members of the Church. The whole process lasted three months beginning in the state

The Maiden alone before her judges, water colour by Maurice Boutet de Monvel. A painter and illustrator of children's books, he published a highly successful work entitled *Joan of Arc* in 1896.



Joan of Arc with the Cardinal of Winchester, 1824. The artist, Paul Delaroche, uses colour and shadow to accentuate the threatening presence of the powerful prelate, great-uncle to the king of England, interrogating a sick and tearful Joan in her cell.  
Fine Arts Museum, Rouen.

rooms of Philip II's fortress and transferring after 10<sup>th</sup> March to Joan's prison cell inside one of the towers. Captivity did nothing to diminish Joan's powers of resistance as Cauchon saw when she was asked to take a preliminary oath and swear to tell the truth: "Perhaps you might ask such things as I would not tell!" she said.

The judges wasted little time on Joan's military deeds. They were after a conviction for witchcraft or, even better, heresy. Their questions mainly concerned places or objects supposedly invested with magical powers



Above left: *a row of houses on rue des Bons-Enfants. In Rouen, as elsewhere, the 1970s saw a return to the original medieval colours as half-timbered houses were restored and repainted.*

*This whole district in the east of Rouen was spared during the war and is full of houses that hark back to the times of Joan of Arc. Above right: the rue Damiette, a narrow street near the church of Saint-Maclou, a reminder of the winding little streets of Rouen that Joan knew. There are few straight lines to be seen either on the ground or on the house fronts.*

*Rouen boasts one particularly remarkable reminder of the Middle Ages. The Aître Saint-Maclou, now a tranquil garden surrounded by half-timbered buildings, was once a charnel house during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Such places were a necessary when the city fell victim to epidemics.*

## EVERYDAY LIFE IN ROUEN IN THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

A stroll along the rue Saint Romain to the church of Saint Maclou and then a gentle climb to the church of Saint Ouen via the rue Damiette are all it takes to catch a glimpse of everyday life in 15<sup>th</sup> century Rouen. Many of the little streets were less than a yard wide. Only the main thoroughfares were paved with a gutter running down the middle. Some districts were over-crowded with people, animals and household waste all rubbing along together. What little space remained was further encumbered by the stalls of tradesmen: inn-keepers, butchers, hatters, rag and bone men or cutlers all with



*The tiny rue des Chanoines or Cannon Street, branching off the rue Saint-Romain is easy to miss but evokes the era of Joan of Arc not only because it is so narrow, but also because of its name (cannons were men of the Church who served in and resided nearby the cathedral).*

their hand-painted signs swinging overhead. Not far off the Benedictine monks of Saint Ouen had their gardens. The profusion of church spires attested to the spiritual and material importance of the clergy of the times. The Church educated the rich and catered to the needs of the poor. The English siege of 1418-1419 caused great hardship in Rouen which probably lost



*King Charles VII's arrival in State at Rouen's Beauvoisine gate, 1449. The citizens of Rouen attempted to make up for thirty years of deference to enemy forces by organising a lavish procession in honour of the king.*  
French National Library, Paris.

about half of its 40,000 population. Prosperity soon returned however. The new regent, Lord Bedford, instigated construction works and gave employ to goldsmiths, glass-blowers and other skilled craftsmen. When Charles VII regained Rouen in 1449 the economy continued to grow. The wool trade in particular was responsible for much of the busy river traffic.



The stained glass window known as the fishmongers' window can be found in the cathedral ambulatory. It dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and was a gift from the fishmongers' guild, proof of the prosperity of this and other trades in medieval times.

Work on the present-day Church of Saint Maclou began in 1436 at the instigation of the English regent Bedford who wished to embellish the city. Its five gabled porches spread out towards the street like an opening fan.



such as Domrémy's miraculous fountain, the maypole around which villagers conducted springtime festivities or Joan's visions of saints and angels. On one occasion Cauchon sprang the question: "What have you done with your mandrake?" (a manikin-shaped root endowed, supposedly, with fantastical properties). Joan replied spiritedly : "I have no mandrake and never had one!" A far cry from superstitious visionary, the girl showed herself to be a devout Christian who could clearly tell the difference between religious



An illuminated letter depicting Joan of Arc before her judges. Bishop Cauchon is seated in the centre on a stately throne with an overhanging dais (late 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript).

beliefs and traditional customs. This simple village maiden faced with the terrible might of the Inquisition showed remarkable skill in the art of repartee. When confronted with questions of theology she appealed to the Pope as was her right but this she was refused. The learned judges were more than once thrown by her common sense, inner freedom and the sweeping irony with which she fended off their onslaught of questions. The trial came to a close at the end of March

and a lengthy arraignment was drawn up. It was read to Joan and she refuted the charges. According to inquisitorial practice a summary was sent off for consultation to other doctors and prelates of the Church. The University of Paris, when consulted, handed down a sentence of which the English and Cauchon were apprised by an official document. The charges were as follows: Joan had repeatedly and perniciously lied, she was a heretic and a schismatic. It was a matter of urgency to put an end to the outrage she had perpetrated.

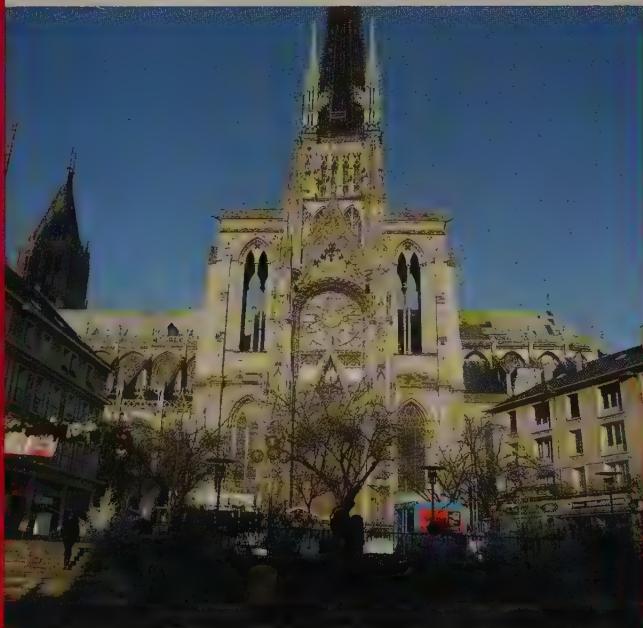


*Saint John's Portal, on the left when facing the cathedral, is a fine example of the Early Gothic style. The tympanum (carved semi-circle over the lintel) portrays the beheading of John the Baptist after the feast where Salome danced for Herod.. Four slim arches carved with leaves and geometrical patterns frame the scene.*

This document reassured the Rouen judges some of whom entertained private doubts as to the legitimacy of the trial. Joan was admonished time and again to confess her sins but never folded. Even the threat of torture had no effect on her. The English began to lose patience. Cauchon then pulled his final trick: a vast public hearing before not only the religious authorities, but also the English authorities and the whole of Rouen's population to be conducted in the open market place.

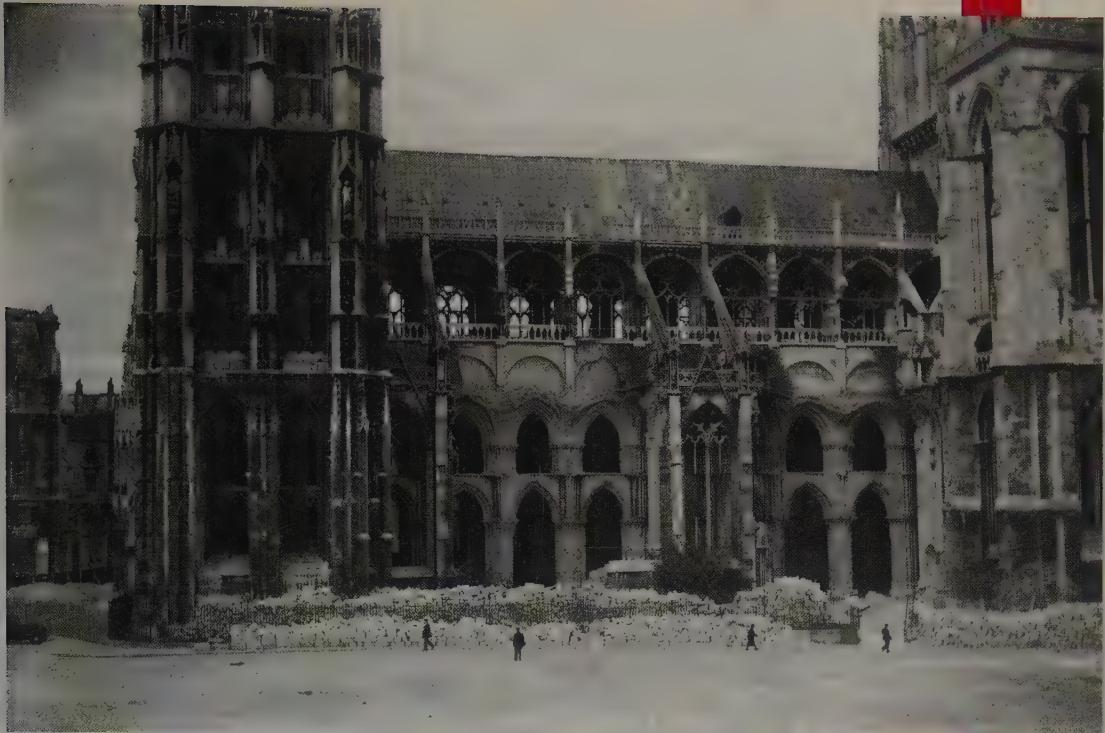
## THE CATHEDRAL DISTRICT TODAY

Joan of Arc was reportedly heard to cry from her stake "Ah, Rouen, I fear you shall suffer for my death!". When British bombs fell on German-occupied Rouen in 1944 the Nazi propagandists had no qualms about using these ancient words to taunt the Allied forces. The area south of the cathedral lay in ruins by the end of 1944. But in the early 1950s it began to rise again

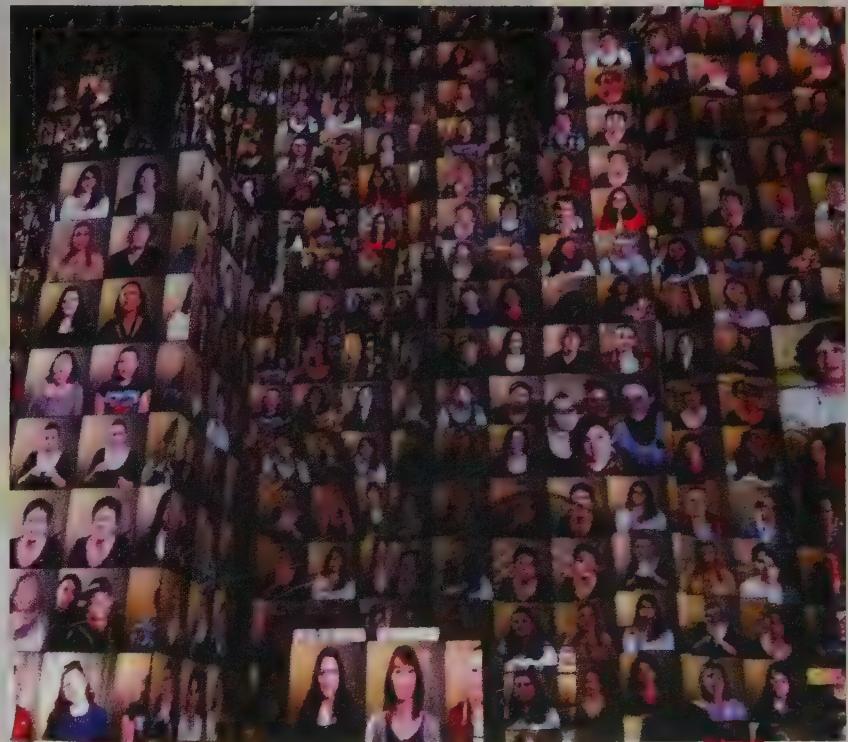


*The concrete buildings to the south of the great Calende Portal were built in 1951. The architects aimed to blend the old and new harmoniously so as not to detract from the splendour of the elaborate Gothic edifice.*

from the ashes. Town planners decided to depart from Le Corbusier's theories and opt for low-rise buildings with slated gabled roofs. It was an attempt not to break with architectural tradition but rather to fit the new buildings harmoniously into the shadow of the great gothic cathedral.



*After the bombings of 19<sup>th</sup> April 1944 and the gutting of its south side, the cathedral was in danger of collapse (photo by Burchell).*



*The finale of the son et lumière show which illuminates the cathedral every summer. A mosaic of "Joans" (women and girls who share Joan's name) is projected onto the façade of the edifice, (12 août 2013, Cosmo AV)*



duz de may suone est conseil ay-  
-comy. ay. laist le visce. ay. phe le  
gaillart ay. ay. le celon. ay. gr de lez  
. le vntou. ay. lezun du croquet  
a conseiller lairest ou approuest denie  
e et laumbre fere chasteaine qui  
le dit que le ay. ay. ay. ay. ay.  
faute se ye. tout faitte  
et rapporte ay. ay. ay. ay. ay.  
a conseiller lairest devant le preste  
ne danteport sur le plandue du zole  
a dit quia este bren furet par les  
ples au zole. ay. lour de ce  
principal et faire en sultre aussi  
a conseiller lairest ou approuest

## ABJURATION AT THE CHURCH OF SAINT OVEN

If Joan of Arc was to abjure it had to be staged so that the whole city could attend and the rest of France be quickly informed, both Charles VII's France and that of Henry VI. So the scene was set on 24<sup>th</sup> May in Saint Ouen's cemetery. The cemetery had seen other public demonstrations such as protests against increased taxation and the arraigning of women suspected of witchcraft. A wooden platform was raised to accommodate the religious authorities. Cauchon was present, of course, and also the cardinal of Winchester, great-uncle to

*The apse of the Church of Saint Ouen as seen from the gardens of the City Hall. The chapels had already been built when Joan's abjuration trial was held nearby on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1431, but the octagonal lantern tower came later, around 1520.*



Pierre-Paul Rubens,  
Joan of Arc at  
Prayer, 1620 (detail).  
Raleigh, North Carolina  
Museum of Art.

the young king of England. Facing them, a weakened Joan stood unused now to the clamour of crowds. She was exhorted to submit to the judgment of the Church or face her executioner. A court scribe read her the long abjuration document. A short summary was then handed to her and she finally made her sign on the page. Some eye-witnesses claimed

*One of Saint Ouen's magnificent stained glass windows, already in place when Joan of Arc came to the city. It is situated on the south side of the choir and shows Saint James saving the life of a hanged man. No doubt Joan was hoping for some such miracle to intervene in her favour.*



*The church of Saint Ouen as seen from rue des Faulx. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century a cemetery bordered the south side of the church where its façade would later be built. This provided a large open space in which to hold Joan's abjuration on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1431.*

that she giggled as she did so perhaps from nerves or because she doubted the veracity of the text she was signing. Who can tell? Joan possessed a rich oral culture, but she was illiterate. She was convinced that she would now be brought to a Church prison. Instead Cauchon, following English orders, had her taken back to her cell in the fortress.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ABBEY OF SAINT OVEN

The arraignment of Joan of Arc took place before crowds of Rouen people who for the most part had never before set eyes on her. The setting was the site of the great abbey church of Saint Ouen. At the time only the choir had been completed. It was huge as befit a monastic edifice, yet this gothic gem and its ele-

*The church of Saint Ouen in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the front-facing towers just beginning to emerge.*

*At the time of Joan's abjuration work was not as far advanced as is shown in this illustration.*



ven radiating chapels supported by ten slim buttresses looked almost fragile. The stained glass windows were magnificent. Building had begun in 1318 and had been held up considerably by the Hundred Years' War, but work did continue through the English occupation. The initial plans were finally completed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.



deuy de may furent des conseil . viij . i . de  
- cestm . viij . i . i . le bise . viij . phe le b  
gaillard . viij . g . le celou . viij . g . de hez  
. de nobes . viij . lucum . du et oquet  
a conseillier lairest ou appoinct . denonc  
e et laumb . sur le chasteine . qui  
in dit que le . un dispart  
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et importe . devant . a mes  
a conseillier lairest devant le procureur  
ne dauphain sur le zplaudre du zole .  
a dit qu'il a estre bne juge par les  
priez au zole . le . jous . de ce n  
principal et faire en autre . a mes  
a conseillier lairest ou appoinct .

## JOAN DECLARED A RELAPSE<sup>1</sup>

trial was to take on increasing importance as her judges cast around for some verifiable crimes of which to accuse her. Joan declared that the celestial voices she heard had ordered her to don male apparel and that it was "the least thing". In other words it was sui-

The abjuration document read to Joan and which she signed stated that she should no longer wear men's clothing. This statement of no great account in the original

Joan of Arc imprisoned in Rouen by Pierre-Henri Revoil, 1819. *The closing speeches of Joan's trial, and other documents, mention that she wore a gambeson or doublet, a garment worn over a shift and serving as braces to hold up the hose.* The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



1. Said of a person who fell back into heretical ways after having previously abjured.

*For over a thousand years a manor house has existed alongside the cathedral to house the bishop and his entourage. It has obviously undergone many changes over the centuries. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the interior façade was remodeled to create a more harmonious impression and the Gothic windows were replaced by windows in the classical style.*



*In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Archbishop Guillaume de Flavacourt had his palace next to the cathedral partially rebuilt, including the vast room where Joan was finally condemned on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1431. She was eventually redeemed in this same room of which there remains only a gable and its bay window.*



table clothing in which to go to war and live surrounded by men. She also insisted on the importance of keeping her maidenhood intact in carrying out her divine mission. Her judges, in accordance with the views of the times, held that a woman dressing as a man was guilty of rebellion against the established order or worse, of an unnatural act.



*Joan was tried within these walls on the rue Saint Romain. They have since been restored, apart from the original watch tower built by Guillaume de Flavacourt.*

Meanwhile the English were dissatisfied with the outcome of the Saint Ouen abjuration. Even condemned to a lifetime in jail, Joan remained a danger because of her unstoppable charisma. They orchestrated an attempt to make her take up men's clothing once more, leaving items of men's apparel close by while inciting her guards to abuse

## JOAN OF ARC AND ROUEN

The Last Communion of Joan of Arc by Charles Henri Michel, 1889. The scene takes place just before Joan left to be burnt at the stake in the Old Marketplace. Once her sentence had been pronounced Bishop Cauchon granted her permission to receive the Eucharist in prison even though she had been excommunicated and thus exiled from the Christian community. Perhaps he felt some remorse or just wanted to get things over with...

Fine Arts Museum, Rouen

her. On 28<sup>th</sup> May, Cauchon and a number of other judges appeared at the jail to record that Joan had “relapsed” and fallen back into the error of her ways. Not only was she dressed like a man, she even recanted, claiming to hear voices once more and reaffirming her belief in her divine mission. In the eyes of the inquisitorial tribunal a relapsed heretic could only be executed. So, on 29<sup>th</sup> May in the archbishop’s palace, Joan of Arc received a sentence of death.



## THE GREAT CLOCK

The Gros Horloge of Rouen is exceptional in that “clock” being a feminine noun in French, it should really be called the “grosse horloge”. Perhaps it was so impressive in its time that to make it female was deemed inappropriate! In Joan of Arc’s day it was one of the few ways of telling the right time along with the countless chimes of Rouen’s many churches. Part of the

*The only part of the patchwork of buildings that comprise the Great Clock that Joan of Arc might have seen is the tower. It was built in 1389 to replace the old belfry, destroyed by royal command to reprimand the people of Rouen when they objected to the imposition of a new tax.*



delightfully disparate structure had already been built by the time Joan came to Rouen. Not the gleaming clock face or the Renaissance archway, still less the Louis XV water fountain, but the belfry originally formed a part of Rouen’s first City Hall built on this spot in 1389. The clock was there and Joan could well have heard it strike the hours in her prison cell and on her final journey to the stake in the Market Place.



... ou de may faveur au conseil ay... de  
- catme... lautre le bise... ay... phe le lu-  
gaillart ay... ay... de celors... ay... gr de l...  
- de l... ay... lucan du croquet  
- conseiller lautre au appoin... dentre  
e et l... ay... f... d... d... que...  
a dit que... un apport...  
fauts se y... tout f...  
et rapporte... a... droit aussi  
a conseiller lautre dentre le procu...  
ne dauphine sur le plaidoir du z...  
a dit qu'il a esté bien faveur par les...  
plaidoir du z... le... j... de ce...  
principal et faire en autre... aussi  
a conseiller lautre au appoin... et

## BURNED AT THE STAKE

On the morning of 30<sup>th</sup> May a number of men entered Joan's cell. Among them were a bailiff and bishop Cauchon. Realizing what was about to happen she cried, "Bishop, my blood is on your hands!" She was escorted to the Old Marketplace by English soldiers. One final judicial anomaly shows how high tensions were running that morning and how badly they wanted the job done fast: Joan ought to have been brought before the secular judge who was the only one authorized to pronounce the death sen-

*Joan of Arc at the stake, illumination from the Vigils of Charles VII, 15<sup>th</sup> century. In reality on the day of her death she was raised up on a pile of firewood. French National Library, Paris.*



tence. Cauchon no doubt feared a last minute hitch. Joan's head was shaved and she was made to don a parchment mitre upon which the list of her crimes was inscribed. She was sermoned one last time before the relapse sentence and final conviction were pro-



*In this work by  
E. Lenepveu,  
displayed in the  
Pantheon in Paris,  
Joan kisses the cross  
held up to her by  
Dominican monk  
Isambard de la  
Pierre just before she  
is put to death.*

nounced. She declared that she forgave all concerned and asked for a crucifix which was brought from a nearby church. As the flames began to lick the nine foot high pyre some officials became emotional, not least the English soldiers who had probably never

had to witness the burning of a 19 year old girl accused of witchcraft before. No doubt others considered the unfolding ceremony as an expression of divine judgment. Why, if Joan was truly guided by God, did he not send some last minute miracle to save her?

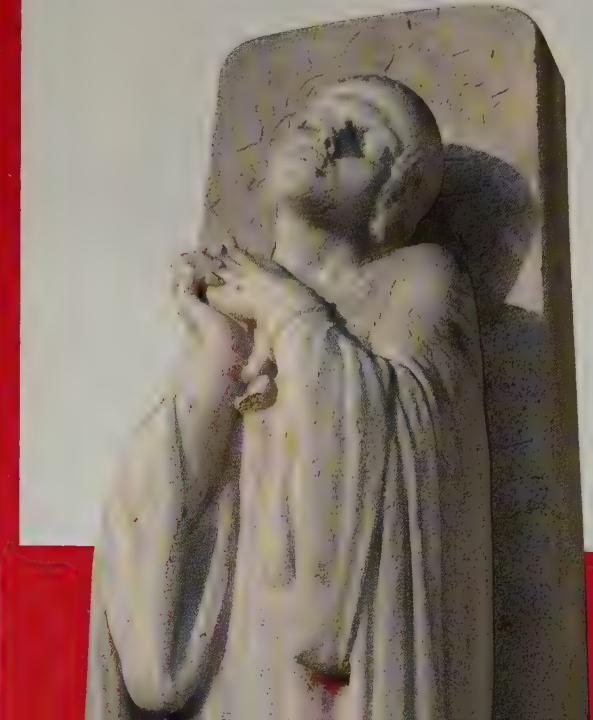


*Joan of Arc's ashes thrown into the river Seine, drawing by Emile Deshays, 1911. It is highly unlikely that the scene took place before such a crowd and with such solemnity. Getting rid of Joan's remains was a mark of weakness on the part of the English who feared the emergence of a cult following after her death.*

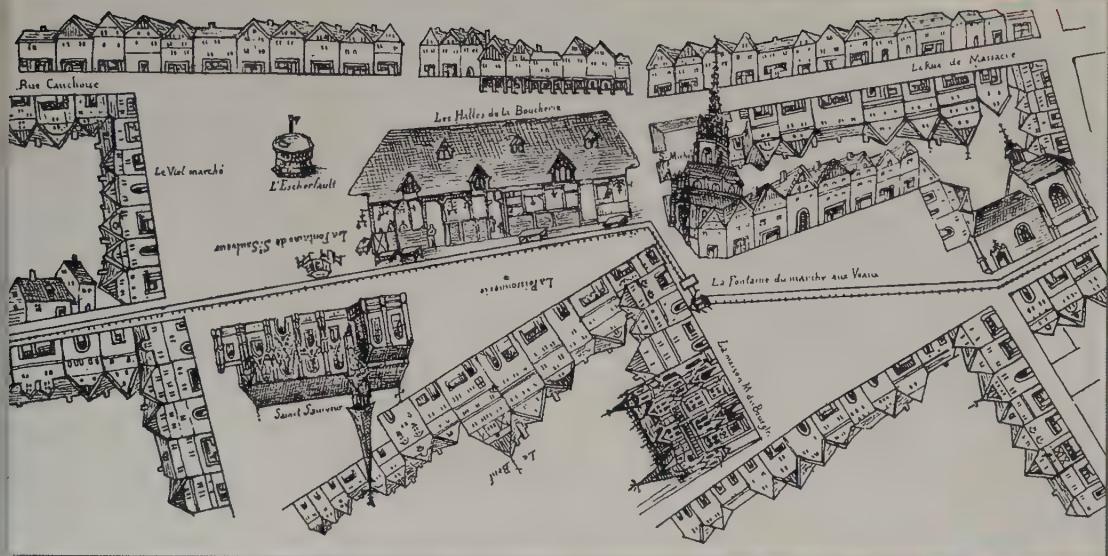
She left little lasting impression on the people of Rouen in the immediate aftermath of her death. Captain Warwick, wishing to avoid the risk of a cult following developing around the girl's relics, ordered her ashes to be thrown in the river Seine.

## THE OLD MARKETPLACE THROUGH THE CENTURIES

When Joan of Arc was led to the stake the Marketplace was much smaller than it is today and shaped like a triangle. Practically nothing remains of what her gaze fell on apart from the foundations of Saint Saviour's church. Always a hub of commercial activity, the marketplace was paved in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. In medieval times a covered market held butchers' and fishmongers' stalls and inns or taverns abounded. During the Second French Empire the surface of the square was doubled and two metal market halls were erected. On 10<sup>th</sup> July 1920 it was decided by law to build a monument expressing the gratitude of the nation towards Joan of Arc who was then seen as the embodiment of French patriotic feeling. She was depicted praying in the flames in a stone sculpture by Maxime Real del Sarte. When the market halls were moved elsewhere in 1969 the Old Marketplace could finally be developed as we see it today. The 1456 trial of nullification stipulated that a cross should be constructed in memory of Joan. An aluminium cross now stands alongside a church and memorial gallery in her honour inscribed with the words of André Malraux: "O Jeanne, without sepulchre, without portrait, you knew that the tomb of heroes is the heart of the living."



*Statue of Joan at the stake (1926), Maxime Real del Sarte. The sculpture is set beside the modern church of Joan of Arc. The artist, a fervent admirer of Joan, has created many such works. Two replicas can be found in Quebec and in Buenos Aires.*



*The site of the stake can be seen close to the covered market and to the south Saint Saviour's church (lost during the Revolution) whose foundation stones are still visible today.*

*From the Book of Fountains, drawing by Jacques Le Lieur.*

*The Old Marketplace as seen in 1926 (photo by Raoul Brunon). Two metal market halls were erected in 1868, masking the site of the stake. They were demolished in 1970.*



## THE PRESENT-DAY CHURCH OF ST JOAN OF ARC

The quirky twisted architecture of the church that occupies today's Old Marketplace comes as a surprise in this medieval city square. The scaled slate roof dips and dives, the walls swoop and curve, the low-set windows are reminiscent of fish or eyes. Around the apse radiate not chapels but ... market stalls. There is no spire but the soaring roof evokes a stylized funeral pyre or stake, just like Joan's. Designed by the architect Louis Arretche, the church was extremely controversial at first, though the fuss died down before the official opening in 1979.



In contrast to its aggressive exterior the church radiates peace and joy inside. The ceiling is shaped like an overturned boat. A tapestry of stained glass lines the northern wall. These Renaissance windows came originally from the old church of Saint Vincent which fell victim to the bombings of 1944. They had been removed as a safety measure in 1940. The most renowned window is known as the "chariot window" since it depicts three antique-style processions: Adam and Eve at the top and the Virgin Mary overcoming the Devil at the bottom.

*The church of St Joan of Arc with its unusual slate roof (1979). The architect, Louis Arretche, had previously worked on the restoration of Saint-Malo in a very different traditional style.*



Stained glass windows inside the church of St Joan of Arc. Rouen possesses a great number of outstanding stained glass windows. Some of the most interesting were those of 16<sup>th</sup> century St Vincent's church, taken down for safe-keeping during the war in 1940 and reinstated in 1979 in this modern setting. Set at eye-level for optimal viewing, the windows illuminate the whole building.





auz de may furent une conseil vij. i. de  
- colm. vij. lundi le bise. vi. pley le b  
gaillard vi. et de cel pov. vi. et de lue  
. de voston. vi. lucum du croquet  
a conseillier lairest ou approuvist dentre  
e et lambin fons de la mane qui  
a dit que le un approuve  
fautes se y  
et rapporte a  
sont fructes  
droit aussi  
a conseillier lairest dentre le procureur  
ne dauphine sur le splanche du volc.  
a dit qu'il a este bien juge par les  
proces au jeno. le jour de ce n  
principal et faire en outre aussi  
a conseillier lairest ou approuvist

## REDEMPTION AND LEGACY

Shortly after coming to Rouen in 1450 Charles VII ordered an enquiry into Joan's conviction. His aim was to prove that the judges had made a grave mistake. His honour was at stake. It was unthinkable that he should owe his ascension to the French throne to a heretical witch. The enquiry lasted six years. The trial archives were examined and witnesses interrogated. Some had since died including the principal judge, Cauchon. Others however were still alive: Joan's mother, some of her companions in arms (Dunois) and members of the



*Portrait of Charles VII  
by Jean Fouquet,  
c. 1450. The king had  
conquered Rouen by this  
time and held sway over  
practically all of France.  
Louvre museum, Paris*

jury from her 1431 trial. The latter claimed they were forced to toe the English line under threat of death. They blamed Cauchon who was a handy scapegoat even though there had been around fifty judges sitting in court. They accused the bishop of tampering with



*The great aluminium cross in the Old Marketplace. Erected, along with the modern church, over 500 years after it was originally promised in 1456 at Joan's redemption trial.*

the minutes of some of the hearings and exerting pressure on his assessors. Some witnesses just happened to have lost their memories... The Pope decided to nullify the trial. A new trial of redemption was opened. Jean Juvenal des Ursins, archbishop of Reims was one of

the many jurists who also included Jean Bréhal, inquisitor-general of France. The final verdict which proclaimed Joan's innocence was read out in public on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1456 at the archbishop's palace and later at Saint Ouen and the Old Marketplace.

# MARK TWAIN'S JOAN OF ARC



HARPER & BROTHERS  
PUBLISHERS

*Joan's story inspired many writers. In 1896 Mark Twain published Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, by the Sieur Louis de Conte, a partly fictional work, nonetheless infused with a reverence not often associated with this light-hearted author.*

Joan of Arc soon became a legend and inspired many works of art whether literary, historical, pictorial (including portrayals in stained glass), musical, theatrical or cinematographical. She has even been the subject of Japanese manga! Ever since her own time

## THE JOAN OF ARC MEMORIAL MONUMENT IN BONSECOURS

A trip east of Rouen up Saint Catherine's Hill affords a fine view of the Seine river valley. It is also the site of an imposing monument dedicated to the Maid of Orleans close to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century neo-Gothic basilica. Around the year 1865 some members of Rouen's population remarked on the absence of any memorial to Joan in the city. Their first thought was to built something close to the castle keep which bore her name, but there was a lack of ground space at that spot. The archbishop then decided to move the project up the hill to Bonsecours where the stone Maid could gaze down forever to the scene of her martyrdom. Money



*The Joan of Arc commemoration monument in Bonsecours, overlooking the river Seine. The architect Juste Lisch created the work in 1892 in the early Renaissance style. He also worked in the city of Amiens under the patronage of Viollet-le-Duc.*

soon began to flow in to finance the project. The official opening in 1892 was well attended.

The Renaissance-style structure was based on one of lantern towers from the castle of Chambord in the Loire valley. A statue of Joan in military garb, hands clasped, stands in the centre facing Rouen. Above her, perched on a smaller lantern topped by a cupola the archangel Michael kills a dragon, symbol of evil. Saints Margaret and Catherine flank the monument on either side. Four sheep also stand watch over the young shepherdess turned warrior. The monument predates the papal decision to canonize Joan which only came in 1920.

in a 15<sup>th</sup> century world where women rarely left the domestic arena her meteoric rise to fame has captured the imagination. French 19<sup>th</sup> century historians such as Michelet and Quicherat, who published the minutes of the trials, were instrumental in putting her back in the public eye. The simple country lass

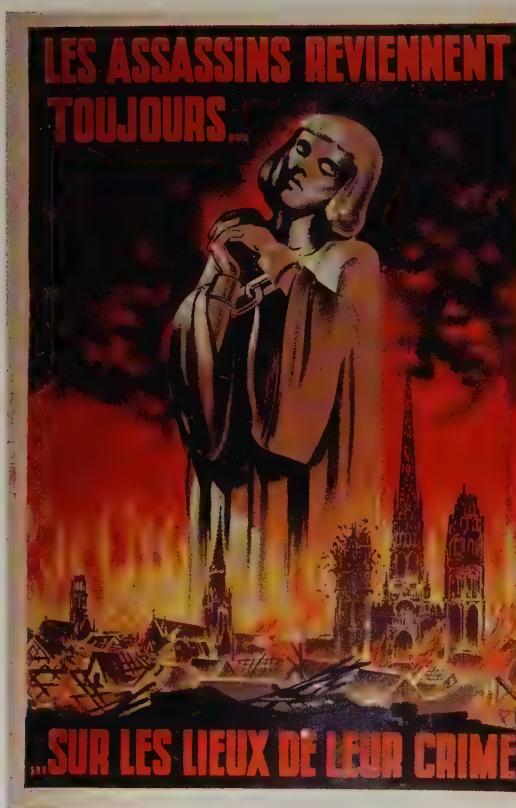


*Sarah Bernhardt playing  
Joan of Arc in The Trial  
of Joan of Arc by Emile  
Moreau in 1909.  
Photograph by Nadar.*

who spurred the nation to rise against their invaders was glorified by rising nationalist sentiment. It took the Church some time to beatify the former victim of the Inquisition but Joan was eventually canonized in 1920. A national secular holiday was decreed by law also in 1920 to be celebrated every second

Sunday in May. Memory, thought and imagination mingle in the works Joan inspires. She is the subject of over one hundred films. The landmark picture of the silent era is Carl Dreyer's "The Passion of Joan of Arc" (1928) famous for his use of close-ups. Many other directors were drawn to the character: Roberto Rossellini, Robert Bresson, Jacques

*A propaganda poster (1944). The nazis tried to discredit the Allies, and in particular the English who had bombarded Rouen, by instrumentalising Joan of Arc. In this poster she appears to be reliving her martyrdom in the flames of the bombed city.*



Rivette, Luc Besson ... Some politicians have attempted to instrumentalise her, but to use Joan of Arc as an emblem of narrow or even aggressive patriotism is duplicitous. She never expressed hatred of foreigners. This idealistic and courageous young woman will always be one of history's universal figures.

## ANDRÉ MALRAUX'S 1964 SPEECH IN ROUEN

André Malraux was invited to the festivities commemorating Joan of Arc in Rouen on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1964. Two years previously he had passed a bill in parliament safeguarding the nation's heritage sites and he strongly encouraged the people of Rouen to do something about the Old Marketplace. He gave a memorable speech to the crowd referring to Joan of Arc as "the one universally respected figure in the history of our nation.

Her legend was revived before she was rediscovered as a person, but this rediscovery has incredibly and uniquely done nothing to tarnish the legend. On the contrary, it burns even brighter! We know now that in Chinon, in Orleans, in Reims, at war and even here, save on one terrible day, her soul was invulnerable [...] Whether confronting the dauphin, the prelates of the Church or men at arms she fought for what was essential to her, and that, since time immemorial, is the magic of action. [...] This was a world where Isabeau of Bavaria could sign the death warrant of France in Troyes and see fit only to write in her journal that she had bought a new bird cage that day; a world where the dauphin wondered if he was still a dauphin, France wondered if she

was still France and the army wondered if it was still an army. She set the army, the king and the country back on their feet. Where there was nothing, there was hope and the stirrings of military victory. [...] It was easier to burn her at the stake than to wrench her from the soul of France. [...] Oh Joan, without sepulchre or portrait, you knew that the graves of the heroes are in the hearts of the living no matter your twenty thousand statues in cities and in churches, all that France was ever loved for shines through your face."

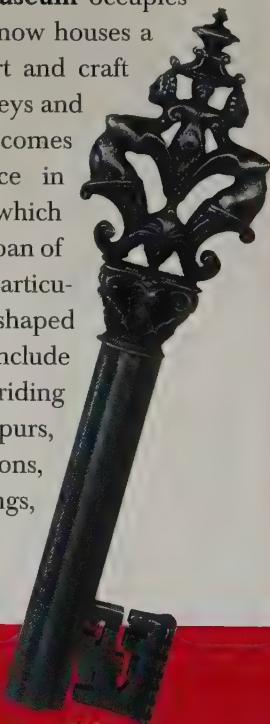


*The Minister of Cultural Affairs, André Malraux, lighting the flame at the Joan of Arc festivities in 1964. The flame is rekindled on the last Saturday in May each year in memory of Joan. A special guest is always invited to make a speech, usually on the theme of patriotic feeling. Parades are organised all over the city.*

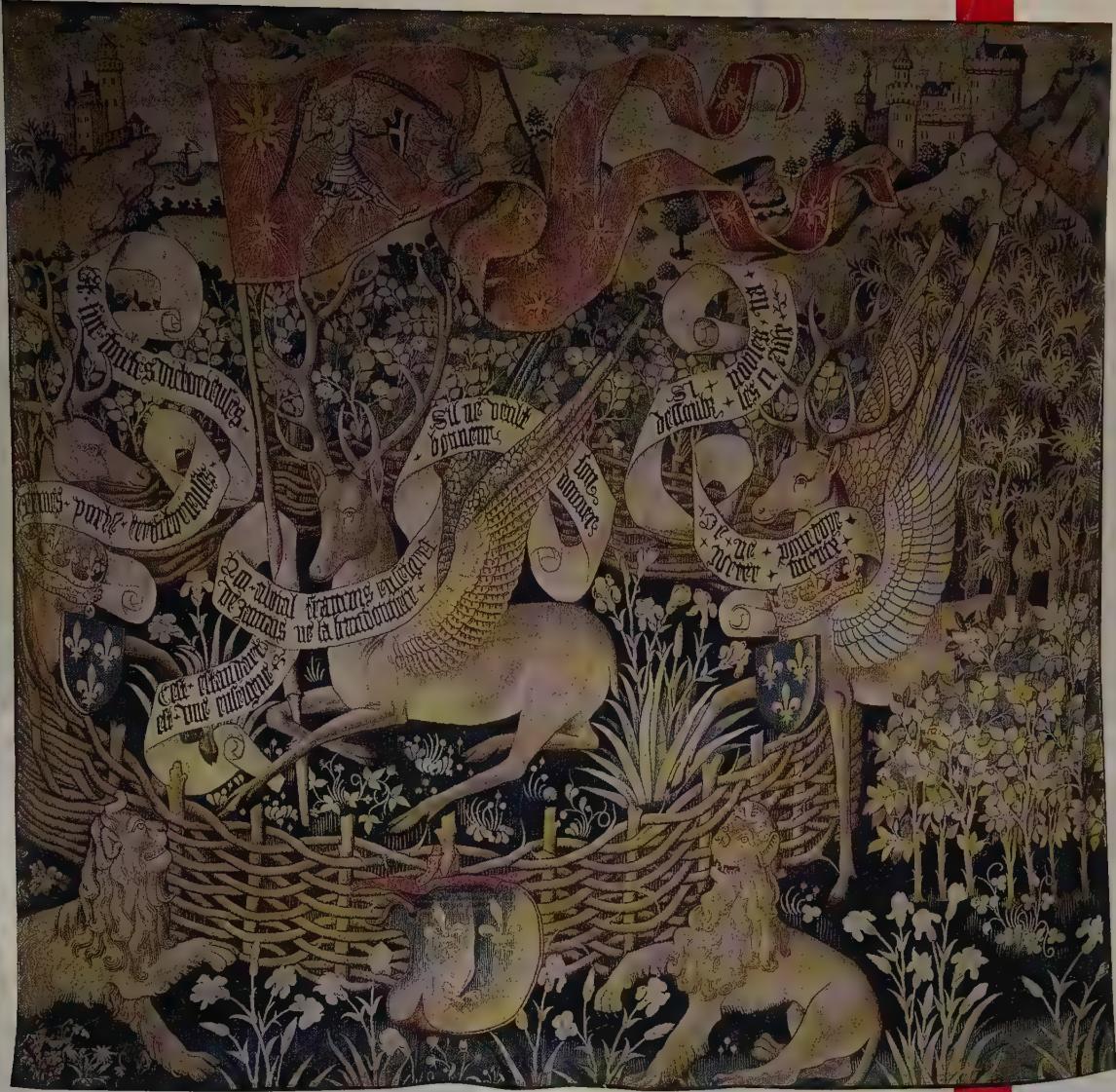
## TWO OTHER MAJOR MUSEUMS TO SEE IN ROUEN

The **Museum of Antiquities** displays mainly local artifacts dating from ancient times through to the Renaissance period. The late Middle Ages, when Joan of Arc was alive, is well represented. The importance of the Church in medieval society accounts for the predominance of sacred objects on display: stained glass windows from the churches of Rouen, carved capitals from the nearby abbey of Boscherville, statues of Our Lady, jeweled reliquaries, crosiers, liturgical vessels... Everyday pieces can also be found, in particular a number of ceramic dishes. There is a large collection of 15<sup>th</sup> century polychrome floor tiles, some of them painted with animal motifs. The centerpiece has to be the famed "Winged stags" tapestry depicting the animals on a flowered background with banners alluding to King Charles VII's victories over the English army and royal heraldic devices such as the "fleur de lys".

**Le Secq des Tournelles Museum** occupies what was once a church and now houses a unique collection of metal art and craft work. A wide array of locks, keys and even railings, one of which comes from Jacques Coeur's palace in Bourges, provide a setting in which to imagine life in the times of Joan of Arc. The door knockers are particularly evocative, some of them shaped like human faces. Other items include chests and boxes, jewelry, riding equipment such as bits and spurs, kitchen utensils (knives, spoons, grills, pothooks, andirons, tongs, lamps and candlesticks ...).



*A key from Le Secq des Tournelles Museum, Rouen.*



*The Winged Stag tapestry,  
15<sup>th</sup> century. It was  
probably commissioned by  
one of King Charles VII's  
followers who took part in  
the fighting. The enclosures  
may symbolise Normandy  
and Guyenne both  
recaptured from the English  
at the end of the Hundred  
Years' War.*

Museum of Antiquities, Rouen



de may furent au conseil ay. j. le  
- cotm. ay. lais le bisee. ay. phe le b  
gaillart ay. g. de cel poe. ay. grande lez  
de montay. ay. lures. du croquet  
a conseiller lairet ou approuve de  
e et lambin furent au conseil que  
la dit que le apportez  
faitez se yes. ay. tout fructe  
et rapportez. ay. droit aussi  
a conseiller lairet devant le pectoculier  
ne d'autrepart sur le plandue du pof.  
a dit qu'il a estre bien juge par les  
spes au roullo. ay. lour. de ce n  
principal et faire en autre. ause  
a conseiller lairet ou approuve

## A HISTORIAL FOR JOAN

a new and original concept which opened in 2015 in a particularly appropriate setting. The “Historial” is housed in the Archbishop’s Palace next to the Cathedral on the very spot

Until 2012 Joan’s memorial was a small wax-works museum in the Old Marketplace. When it closed down the City of Rouen devised

*Joan’s Historial is housed in a section of the archbishop’s palace next to the cathedral.*



where Joan's two trials took place. Creative display techniques include 3D videos, black light effects, interactive kiosks, and of course a selection of items from the collections. The museum includes seven different displays spread over three storeys, the first of which immerses visitors in a medieval atmosphere of crypts, guard rooms and medieval kitchen. A virtual tour guide plays the role of Juvénal des Ursins, a key figure in Joan's redemption

*One of the many special effects which bring to life Joan's girlhood in Domrémy. She would have danced with her friends around the fairy tree and gone for walks in the Chenu Woods.*



*15<sup>th</sup> century spiral staircase open to visitors in the Historial.*



trial (1456). A second section displays ways in which Joan's legend has been interpreted and embroidered upon in works of literature and art throughout the centuries. Six hundred years after her death Joan of Arc remains one of the world's icons.

*The Historial houses a library of legends where visitors can marvel at and reflect upon the countless myths and conflicting interpretations that Joan's life has given rise to.*



**Museums where facts and artefacts concerning Joan can be found**

**L'Historial Jeanne d'Arc**  
7, rue Saint-Romain - Rouen

For further information about the Historial:  
[www.historial-jeannedarc.fr](http://www.historial-jeannedarc.fr)



**Fine Arts Museum**  
Esplanade Marcel-Duchamp - Rouen  
Tél. 02 35 71 28 40 - Fermé le mardi  
[www.mbarouen.fr](http://www.mbarouen.fr)

**Joan of Arc tower**  
Rue du Donjon - Rouen  
Tél. 02 35 98 16 21 - Fermé le mar. et le dim. matin  
[www.tourjeannedarc.fr/](http://www.tourjeannedarc.fr/)

**Le Secq des Tournelles Museum**  
2, rue Jacques-Villon - Rouen  
Tél. 02 35 71 28 40 - Fermé le mardi  
[www.museelesecqdestournelles.fr](http://www.museelesecqdestournelles.fr).

**Museum of Antiquities**  
Cloître Sainte-Marie 198, rue Beauvoisine - Rouen  
Tél. 02 35 98 55 10 - Fermé le lun. et le dim. matin  
[www.rouen.fr/antiquites](http://www.rouen.fr/antiquites)

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[www.rouentourisme.com](http://www.rouentourisme.com)



*A visit to the Historial will take you through the 16<sup>th</sup> century vaulted kitchens of the archbishop's palace.*

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Joan had to discard her suit of armour when she entered Rouen as a prisoner of the English towards the end of the year 1430, but her fighting spirit never wavered despite the gruelling trial she was to undergo. She has long been a source of fascination for artists, historians and indeed anyone who, in the words of André Malraux, can see in her “the genius of action” in an “invulnerable soul”. Take a trip in her footsteps through a Rouen where her memory lingers on.

**Cécile-Anne Sibout** is a historian and author of a number of books on the history of Normandy published by Editions des Falaises. She holds a teaching post at the University of Rouen.

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